

Lightweight briefcase

A fresh take – the messenger bag meets the briefcase. **By Jemima Schlee**

You will need

- 1m cream linen oilcloth
- 50cm of cotton fabric for lining
- 1m firm fabric stiffener
- Sharp scissors
- Pins, sewing needle, sewing cotton
- Sewing machine
- Ruler and paper for making your pattern
- Leather shoulder strap
- Leather handle
- 2 x leather buckles
- 4 x bag feet
- Leather needle and waxed thread

Pattern list:

(diagram on page 87)

- A** main body outer – cut 1 in linen, 1 in fabric stiffener
- B** inside front flap – cut 1 in linen, 1 in fabric stiffener
- C** inside pocket – cut 1 in lining cotton
- D** lining – cut 2 in lining cotton
- E** inside pocket – cut 1 in fabric stiffener
- F** base – cut 1 in fabric stiffener

1. For the bag lining: fold piece C in half, right sides together. Sew a 1cm seam along the two short edges. Turn right side out and insert the piece of stiffener (E). Fold the raw edges of the fabric over 1cm to one side and tack in place. Place one of the lining pieces (D) right side up. Pin or tack the pocket into place with the two top corners positioned as marked on the diagram. Sew along the two side edges and the bottom edge by machine.

2. Place the second lining piece (D) right side down on top of the first piece and pin or tack the two sides edges. Sew a 1cm seam along each side. Pin or tack the two bottom edges and sew a 1cm seam 5cm along each end of the bottom (**image 1**) – this will leave a 27.5cm turning

gap for later on – press these seams flat with a hot iron, at the same time folding the raw edges of the turning gap 1cm. Tack around the turning gap.

3. Align the end of the side seams to the ends of the bottom seams and sew a 1cm seam to create a flat bottom for your bag lining (**image 2**). Pin or tack one long edge of linen piece B to the top edge of the lining above the pocket and with right sides facing. Pin or tack and sew a 1cm seam (**image 3**). Set aside.

4. Lay your outer piece (A) right side up on top of the corresponding pieces of fabric stiffener. Pin or tack around all the edges and stay stitch all the way round both stitches by machine 2mm or 3mm from the edge (**image 4**). Position piece F as marked on the diagram, pin or tack around all the edges and stay stitch all the way round both stitches by machine 2mm or 3mm from the edge.

5. Position and stitch on the two buckles and the handle as marked on the diagram. Markers at the top of the diagram represent the position of the bottom halves of the buckles, the middle side for each end of the strap, the lower middle for each end of the handle and the bottom markers for the top halves of the buckles.

6. With right sides facing, fold up the front of the bag and align the side seams. Pin or tack and sew a 1cm seam along each side and press open with a very cool iron. Align the end of the side seams to the centres of the bottom edges. Pin or tack and sew 1cm seams (**image 5**). Turn right side out and stitch the shoulder strap in place, centred on the side seams, and the bag feet on the four corners of the base (**image 6**).

7. Turn the outer inside out again and place the lining inside it so that right sides are together. Pin or tack all around the raw edges and sew a 1cm seam by machine – make sure the buckle parts stitched to the bag flap are folded back on themselves and tucked away from the seam. Snip into the corner, close to but not cutting, on both sides where the stitching turns at 90° between the body of the bag and the flap.

8. Turn the bag out through the turning gap, then close the gap by hand with a needle and thread.

9. Finally, press all around the top open edge of the bag and the bag flap with a very cool iron and topstitch a couple of millimetres from the edge.

Resources

Cream linen extra wide oilcloth:

shop.norfolktextiles.co.uk

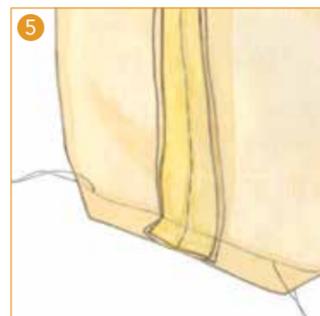
Stiffener: www.candh.co.uk

Leather buckles, handle and shoulder strap:

www.simpleway.co.uk

Bag feet: www.bag-clasps.co.uk

Lining fabric: www.brightonsewingcentre.co.uk



ILLUSTRATIONS: EMMA COWLEY

